
UB Semester in London

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Study Abroad Program Guide

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¹ We appreciate helpful advice from many people: UB Study Abroad personnel, CAPA staff, Leonard Chew, Fung Shing Wong, Andrew Yeo, and all the 2014 *UB Semester in London* inmates of debiworld, in the preparation of this Handbook. Please do not use any portion of these materials without the express permission of the authors.

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Welcome to the 2017 *UB Semester in London*

Greetings from RJ Tan and Debi Street

Congratulations on making a life-changing decision to study abroad in London. Although it may seem a long time before the program starts, your January London arrival date will be here before you know it. You'll be settling into your flats, dazed with jet-lag, and wondering if you will be able to remember the names of your roommates when you awaken in the morning.

Believe this: The *UB Semester in London* program will stay with you long after you leave. Our hopes are that you will make the most out of every opportunity that you encounter during your time abroad. After all, by the time you get to London, you will have already spent quite a bit of time, effort, worry, and money on this endeavor...now it is up to you to make this experience a worthwhile investment in your future.

To do that means laying down a solid groundwork of pre-departure preparations at home, taking advantage of all of the opportunities that come your way while you are in London, anticipating challenges and developing coping mechanisms when things don't quite work out as planned, deciding to do your best at everything you do in London, and then reaping the rewards of learning, travelling and making friends from all around the world.

There will be, of course, inevitable bumps and bruises along the way. But don't lose hope! And certainly not your sense of humor or curiosity. Being in a new and strange environment is always a little disconcerting and unless you decide differently, there is always a risk that it won't bring out the best in you. Just remember to approach every situation with an open mind and go with the flow. Realize that frustrations, and dealing with them positively, are part and parcel of your journey. Don't whine. Look for the best in everyone. Learn from every mistake or embarrassing moment (there will be some, that's okay, we all have them). Laugh at yourself. Laugh with others. Celebrate the novel and diverse perspectives that you will encounter in London. Think big, be generous, give the benefit of the doubt. You have what it takes to overcome seemingly daunting and unfamiliar situations and come out the other side, a stronger, more resilient, more accomplished, better educated, and MUCH more interesting person.

RJ Tan (a former *UB Semester in London* student) and Debi Street (program director) prepared this Guide to help you before and during your time in London. It's essentially everything you need to know (well, almost) about this program. We hope you find it useful and that, when you look back on your own adventures, you will discover that you love London as much as we do.

Best wishes from both of us! Or as Londoners might say...Cheers!

RJ Tan (2014 *UB Semester in London* student alumna)

Debi Street (*UB Semester in London* program director)



DESTINATION:
LONDON

SPECIAL NOTES REGARDING OUR DESTINATION

Pre-departure

We will begin the program with an early-December north campus orientation session, and/or a Skype/email orientation session to UB-SIM that will include an overview of London and details about program specifics. Students are expected to monitor their UB email at least several times a week after program admission (October 1) through December 1 to keep up with important information about activities and travel, and to reply to all emails. After December 1, students are expected to check their UB email daily in case there is late-breaking and/or important pre-departure information about the program. This is especially important for accessing up to date information about coordinating visas and airline arrangements and transportation to student housing in London.

Climate

Winter can be grey and cold, sunny and cold, or wet and cold. Every variation of cold will be available for our adventure! Dress in layers. Hats, scarves, gloves and warm socks are a must. While it is unlikely to snow, it will often feel very cold. London is full of old buildings that typically alternate between drafty/chilly and overheated, so having a layer to peel off (and put back on) is important. We also spend much more time outdoors in the elements (walking between destinations, waiting at bus stops) than people from car/taxi cultures might expect. Jeans and sweaters are appropriate dress for most of our activities. Although you may find them most comfortable, sweats, pajamas, tracksuits and running shoes (called trainers in the UK) may make people sneer and think "tacky" in very fashionable London. For at least one or two occasions, having something dressier to wear than daily jeans and sweaters would be nice: dress, skirt, or trousers for women and casual business dress shirt and trousers for men would be most appropriate.

Just about when you think you will never be entirely warm or dry again, spring happens! The sun shines, the temperature warms up so much that you think picnics in the park might be the best way to spend the day—and you are probably right. One advantage of our program is that we start with the shortest days and the worst weather, and end with long spring evenings and (at least some) sunny spells. The layers can be transformed into spring clothing, simply by wearing fewer of them.

Transportation

Every student will receive a Zones 1-2 Oyster card upon arrival. More specific information about the Oyster card will be provided in your first CAPA London briefing, along with information about how to register your card so it can be replaced if you lose it. We will travel to program activities via foot, the Tube (underground), buses, and over ground trains. You will learn how to “queue up” (line up) politely to board public transportation in our first few transportation experiences. Remember, putting a bag or (worse) your feet on an empty seat in public transportation is the height of rudeness on a crowded public transportation system. Your public transport travel fare entitles you only to occupy the space of a single seat—if you can find one! Impress people with how courteous UB students are, even in unfamiliar surroundings. Be sure to surrender your seat to disabled or injured passengers, the elderly, or pregnant women—anyone who is less able to stand than you are. You will do more—much more—walking than you are accustomed to; having VERY comfortable footwear is essential. Wear your most comfortable shoes on the plane and pack another equally comfortable pair. That way, your feet can always be dry/warm. Wet feet get cold; London is cold. Wet feet are prone blisters; London is wet. This is essential: bring/wear comfortable shoes.

“Download Citymapper on your phone before you get here. It’s going to be the guiding light when you’re trying to figure how to get around.” – *RJ Tan*

Safety

London is generally a safe city, but students are encouraged to be very aware of their surroundings (pickpocketing can happen in crowds) and to walk in groups at night. Use common sense. If you go out in the evening, be sure that you are with a friend, and that your flatmates know when to expect you home. Do not take cruising minicabs, call for a taxi if you need one, or take one of London’s iconic regular taxis.

Accommodations

Students will stay in conveniently located shared flats in/near central London—well-equipped flats in a neighborhood with a lively vibe and good transportation links. Each flat has a fully equipped kitchen, lounges (living rooms) with TVs and shared bedrooms. Same sex students will share rooms. Costs for accommodations are included in the program fee; all students are required to live in program housing. We will study in classrooms at the CAPA London Study Centre on Cromwell Road in South Kensington, which is about a 10 minute walk from Earls Court or Gloucester Road underground stations.

Meals

Flats have fully equipped kitchens that you should use, especially with good supermarkets nearby and street markets in abundance. Preparing meals at home in expensive London is a real money saver—spend the pounds saved on dining “at home/from home” for other activities. Most prior students said that they weren’t fully aware how expensive food is in London, and wished they had prepared more of their own meals (cereal for breakfast, packing a sandwich for lunch rather than buying one, bringing along snacks and water). Buying water every day is unnecessarily costly and adds up fast, both in terms of money and harm to the environment (those plastic bottles...).

There are restaurants and cafes everywhere; some are spectacular, others are awful. Food can be very expensive and really blow your budget if you are not careful. Supermarkets and most street markets have high quality, reasonably priced food. However, prices in restaurants range from somewhat to very expensive and serving sizes are often small by US standards (but sensible by other standards). Buying food to take away is usually cheaper than eating in. If you see two prices on the board when you order your food at a cafe counter, the lower price is for takeaway. For UB students from Singapore, there is simply no equivalent to a hawker center in London. However, nearly any type of cuisine imaginable can be found there. Expect to possibly participate in/contribute to one or two potluck meals; having at least a few potluck meals has become a London tradition.

Alcohol

All participants will be of legal drinking age while in London. Every participant must behave responsibly in choices involving alcohol, as the abuse of alcohol endangers not only the individual who does, but other participants in the program as well. Alcohol abuse is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program, at the discretion of the program director. However, wine and beer (especially in friendly pubs) are certainly staples of the British culture of food and drink, and can be enjoyed in moderation. Remember, alcohol consumption is never mandatory and students should feel absolutely no pressure or obligation whatsoever to participate in the consumption of alcohol.

SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT OUR ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The State University of New York at Buffalo provides for the accredited academic portion of the *UB Semester in London* program. CAPA International (CAPA) is UB's partner, and acts as a supportive organization to provide the services we need for a successful Study Abroad semester. Their role is to provide logistic support—CAPA arranges housing, London transportation passes and internships, and provides visa support. CAPA has its own facilities in the South Kensington area of London, which is where UB orientations and all classes are held. The University at Buffalo has designed a highly customized program that is designed specifically to meet the academic needs of UB students (from any major) and to support their timely graduation. CAPA's role is to assist the University in delivering a high quality program in London. Bear in mind that CAPA also serves other universities and study abroad programs, whose activities and academic programs are very different from the *UB Semester in London* program. Those other programs are designed for other purposes, with many fewer inclusions and activities, and much less personal attention than students receive in the UB program. When in doubt, always ask the UB Program Director (Debi Street) or consult with the UB Study Abroad office to get accurate information about the *UB Semester in London* program. Most of the generic material on the CAPA website is unrelated to the UB program.

Useful Websites

<http://www.visitbritain.com/en/US/>

<http://www.timeout.com/london>

The Program Director

Debra (Debi) Street, PhD, is Professor and Chair of the Department of Sociology at the University at Buffalo. She was a Research Scientist at the Florida State University (teaching a study abroad program for that university) and spent a semester doing dissertation research in London. She is a former Senior Research Fellow at King's College, London; a Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America; and, an elected member of the National Academy of Social Insurance (United States). Besides teaching on UB's north campus, Dr. Street also directs a spring semester-long study abroad program in London and frequently teaches at UB's south-south campus at UB-SIM in Singapore. An award-winning teacher, she is the recipient of the 2011 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching and the 2016 CISP award for Outstanding Contributions to International Education. Debi is also a theatre nut, a proud Canadian, a patriotic American, a Singaporean at heart, and an Anglophile who happens to also be a citizen of the United Kingdom! Dr. Street is an internationally-recognized expert in issues associated with policies associated with economic and health security across the life course, and she researches those topics comparatively. The Sociology of Food is a relatively new and growing academic interest of hers.

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Academic Program Description

Spring 2017 is the ninth year for the *UB Semester in London* program. Our academic program is detailed below. The academic program will include classroom lectures, readings, written reaction papers, plus fieldwork and site visits associated with expanding knowledge about sociological concepts, a wide range of social policies and the political economy of food. It also includes the London internship and associated coursework. Students must register for at least 12 credit hours. Credit hours beyond 12 (the two classroom-based classes plus the 6 credit hour internship required for program participation) requires students to make their own arrangements for additional or different coursework, in consultation and with prior approval from Professor Street. Unless students make appropriate arrangements with Professor Street by December 1, 2016, the *UB Semester in London* academic program will consist of 12 academic credit hours in sociology.

All course-related site visits and activities will be on foot or via public transportation. All mandatory course-related academic activities are covered by the program fee. The program fee also covers many cultural activities outside the classroom. Except for mandatory class-related activities, students may "opt out" with 24 hours' advance notice (although it would usually be silly and wasteful to do so). There is no refund for opting out of a program event.

Course Descriptions

SOC 467: Sociology of Social Policy (3 credit hours, letter grade)

London is the platform for a critical assessment of how sociological theory and social science research can improve understanding of the development, implementation, and outcomes associated with social policies in different national contexts. Studying here provides the unique opportunity to take an “outsider” perspective, useful for learning about UK policies but with enough distance for a critical look back at US and Singaporean social policies. We examine legislative, economic, and political issues that shape citizens’ daily lives, through analysis of a range of social policies: education, income support, transportation, housing, etc.

SOC 358: Sociology of Food (3 credit hours, letter grade)

All of the world’s great cuisines (and its not-so-great ones, too) can be found in London’s neighborhoods. Students will explore the central role food plays in our social lives, considering similarities and differences in food experiences among communities, places, regions and nation-states. The sociological significance of food will be approached from multiple perspectives: as part of economic and political systems; as an important element of identity and socialization; as part of community and family structure; and as an embodiment of class, culture, age, and gender.

SOC 496: London Internship. (6 credit hours, pass/fail)

Students gain experience relevant to disciplinary interests and professional aspirations in a variety of government, service, non-profit, and business settings. The written component of this course will be primarily about first-hand experience gained in London-based settings and individual reflection on the experiences. Students will have the opportunity to see theories and issues they have studied in courses put into real world practice, the experiential component that occurs in the workplace. This course is an upper level course that straddles academic and professional worlds. Consequently, you will be held to the same standards that would apply if you were attending graduate school and/or embarking on a professional career in an organization post-graduation.

Assignments

Students will receive a formal syllabus/description of assignments for SOC 467, SOC 477 and SOC 496 the first week of class. All course work is designed so that it can be completed while in London, depending only on resources readily available in London, and unless otherwise specified all work must be submitted by Thursday April 20. Skipping assignments/missing deadlines/failing to fully participate in course and program activities will definitely lower grades.

Grading and Conduct

All UB/UB-SIM and non-SUNY students will be registered automatically for 12-15 credit hours (it will show up as OPR on your HUB view). Students from other SUNY campuses should check registration with both UB Study Abroad and with their home institutions. Since the Study Abroad office will register students automatically as part of program participation, students don’t need to do anything themselves to get registered for spring 2017 (the only exception here is for students taking MGO 302 or MGE 302 online, read important note on the next page and contact Debi Street for more information about that).

At the end of the semester, once all course work has been completed, grades will be distributed into the appropriate courses for academic credit. Students will receive letter grades for SOC 467 and SOC 358 and pass/fail for SOC 496. All students are required to take these 12 credit hours (except business majors, who must take SOC 467 and SOC 496, but may choose not to take SOC 358 if they take MGO 302 and/or MGE 302, see note below). In the program courses, students are expected to apply sociological concepts in ways that are appropriate for their level of education, experience, and major—expectations in that regard are reasonable for non-sociology majors and for students with different class standings (sophomore, junior, senior). Student grades can be enhanced or deteriorate depending on willingness to acclimate and adapt to participate fully in the academic component of the study abroad experience.

Frequent debriefing in London for the program courses will help students discuss concerns or resolve conflicts, to accommodate needs and requests, and to assist students with assignments. Students must behave in ways that reflect favorably on our home nations and the University at Buffalo, both of whom we represent. While behavioral problems are not anticipated, any that arise will be dealt with quickly, firmly, and fairly. Serious infractions (such as illegal activity, aggressive behavior, failure to attend class activities or internships without a valid excuse, academic dishonesty, or willful damage of property) may result in dismissal from the program.

Important note to all students about the course load in London.

Read this section very carefully.

The program fee covers “full time” tuition in London. Unless prior arrangements are agreed between you and Professor Street by November 15 and fully arranged by December 1, 2016, the full time *UB Semester in London* academic program will consist of a minimum of 12 hours of academic credit in SOC 467 (3 hrs), SOC 358 (3 hrs) and SOC 496 (6 hrs), mandatory for all students. Best advice: try to limit yourself to 12 credit hours to permit ample time to experience London outside of academic work. While you may earn more than 12 hours with permission (at no additional cost), it is really not the wisest choice for this intensive experiential program and should be avoided if possible.

There are only very few ways students can alter the combination of coursework (to get to 15 credit hours) described below, but only if students act early and consult with Professor Street. For most students there are only 2 customization options for 3 additional credit hours (total 15 hours):

1. Students make their own arrangements with another professor in a different discipline (or another sociologist, if they want to work on an independent study with one of my colleagues) to do a 3 credit hour independent study course via email/online/other remote means. No professor is obligated to do this. If students want to try, they should have a good idea and reason why it would be appropriate and talk to a professor NOW. If another professor agrees to supervise an independent study, Professor Street will need a copy of the learning agreement and verification from the professor that they will supervise your work for the independent study while you are in London. They will have to agree that all course work will be completed and a grade reported to me not later than May 12, 2017. Students pursuing this option will still take the program of 12 credit hours (described above) plus 3 credit hours of independent study, for a total of 15 credit hours.

2. Students may propose a 3 credit hour independent study in Sociology, supervised by Professor Street. Students who want to do this must send Professor Street a 2-3 page proposal (it should describe your topic, research question, method of research, annotated bibliography) by December 1st. She will consider whether what is proposed for 3 hours of independent study (SOC 499) academic credit is feasible while studying and interning in London.

Completing the unpaid internship for 6 hours of internship credit (SOC 496) is mandatory for all students in the *UB Semester in London* program. Most students will take the SOC 496 Internship for 6 hours of sociology credit. Sociology majors and business majors are eligible for SOC credit only. For students from other majors who want some or all of their internship credit to count for anything other than sociology credit, here are the conditions:

1. If you are a COM student, you may be able to take 3 of the internship hours for COM credit and the remaining 3 for SOC credit. If you want to do this, you will need to request permission and make appropriate arrangements with the COM internship supervisor, Dr. Vivian Williams, to have half of your internship credit to count towards COM. Those arrangements need to be agreed by you and Dr. Williams by Nov 15 and communicated to Professor Street.

2. If you are a PSY major, you may be able to take 3-6 of the internship credit hours for PSY credit, although doing so will NOT replace the PSY major requirement for a specific number of letter graded 400 level credit hours. Professor Street would need to arrange that with Ms. Christa Greenberg (PSY Undergraduate Coordinator) by Nov. 15, so it is important to inform Professor Street soon after admission to the program if you want PSY credit for the internship.

3. Students in the north campus Interdisciplinary Social Sciences program (IDP) can routinely have internships that meet requirements for their major. You must consult with Professor Street by November 15 and receive permission from the IDP Director Dr. Susan Smith if you want your internship to fulfill IDP requirements for graduation.

4. These are the only variations in internship credit that are available. Please don't ask about others, there are none available. And these variations are not automatic, you need to request them and have all arrangements/agreements in place before December 1, 2016.

For business majors only:

1. If you are a business major, you may be able to take MGO 302 or MGE 302, which are Digital Access courses, online while you are in London. Let Professor Street know immediately if this is something you want to do, arrangements can be challenging and take time to get in place.

2. If you are a business major and you enroll in MGO 302 and/or MGE 302 for spring 2017, you must still take SOC 467 and SOC 496, but you can opt not to take SOC 358. Best advice is not to overload in London so that you have ample time to perform well in your required course work, internship, and life in London. You must let Professor Street know what you plan to do and arrangements must be agreed before December 1, 2016.

Information about non-sociology credits

Students taking courses other than SOC 467, 358 and 496 while in London will receive grades as specified by the instructors with whom they made arrangements for those courses. It may be possible to arrange for credit in courses other than sociology, but it is up to the individual student (in consultation with Professor Street) to make those arrangements. At the end of the semester, the instructor for the non-sociology courses will inform Professor Street of the final grade and the grades will be submitted by her to the Study Abroad office for recording with the registrar. If you plan to do this, you should start talking to Professor Street about it in early September, long before the application deadline.

APPLICATION AND PRE-DEPARTURE

Application

Pay attention to details! Before any moving to London can happen, you must handle all of the administrative application information which will include your academic application, letters of recommendation, police background checks (certificates of clearance in Singapore) and several other UB- and CAPA-required documents. Only after you have submitted all required documents, officially accepted to the *UB Semester in London* program and are deemed sufficiently fluent in English (to thrive in upper division university coursework and to be able to manage at professional levels in an internship setting) will students be eligible to receive a visa number that will let them apply for the Tier IV student visa that is required for participation in this program. This year those visa eligibility numbers will be available approximately 90 days before the start of the program, and students should immediately process the visa paperwork.

TIP: Monitor email daily, not just occasionally. Take care of time-sensitive issues right away – there's no excuse for failing to do so. Read every email carefully, from start to finish, before asking questions and ALWAYS reply to emails, whether from the UB Study Abroad office, Professor Street, or CAPA. Part of being resourceful enough to study abroad is being responsible for handling your own application requirements, especially those clearly explained in correspondence to you. By all means, ask clarification questions, but read your correspondence and program materials first.

The first step is/was to complete the materials for the academic application at the UB Study Abroad website to be considered for acceptance into the program. This includes requesting letters of recommendation, preparing a study statement, and other documents. In order to complete the CAPA internship online application, you will need to write a cover letter, prepare a resume, and document the broad areas within which you are seeking an internship. Writing a good cover letter and resume are very critical application tasks; these two documents (along with letters of recommendation) are what help you secure a good internship placement. There are many online resources about writing cover letters and preparing resumes—you should consult those and have someone else proofread your documents to be sure that both documents are PERFECT when you submit them to have the strongest possible internship position. After skype interviews to clarify your skills, interests, interpersonal skills, and English proficiency, CAPA personnel might suggest changes to your letter or resume to cast you in the best possible light. Be open-minded about all internship processes—we are all trying to help you get an internship that is a “good fit” for you.

Police Certificate of Clearance

UB North campus students should check with the UB Study Abroad office about how to complete their police checks, and obtain them as early in the process as possible. For Singapore students, the certificate takes 10 days to process and the office is only open from 8am-2pm. You will have to download and fill in the form from the Singapore Police Force website and submit it to the Police Cantonment Complex at Outram. A screenshot of your acceptance into the program should be sufficient proof of why you need the police certificate in Singapore.

UK Visa Application

After getting all necessary documents assembled and submitted, being accepted into the program, and demonstrating that you have a valid passport (it must be good for at least 6 months after the END of the program, that is your passport must not expire before October 23, 2017), you will receive a unique Tier IV visa number from CAPA (early to mid-October) that will permit you to submit your visa application to the UK Border Agency. **Do that immediately.** You cannot process your visa for this program without receiving a visa number from CAPA, and CAPA cannot apply for the visa number until you have completed all of the preliminary paperwork (both UB and CAPA), been admitted to the program, and proven yourself “visa eligible.”

Remember to follow the document on visa preparation sent by the CAPA Boston contact (most likely Greg) closely, and begin your visa paperwork immediately. You have to surrender your passport to the British government for up to two weeks to get the visa, so it is essential that you plan early enough to accommodate holiday closings (Thanksgiving in the US, Christmas and New Year in the US and Singapore) and any other travel you plan that requires your passport.

“Complete your VISA application before it’s too late! The prices increase (a lot) for express service if you do it later.” – *Cindy Ng*

All students should apply for their Tier IV student visas just as soon as they can—no one can participate in the *UB Semester in London* without one, and no one wants to worry at the last minute about whether they have visa eligibility to be in London. We always recommend that students not purchase their airline tickets until they have their visas in hand.

Internship Materials and Interviews

It is important to submit your online application materials related to internships promptly, to ensure smooth processing of your internship application. Your cover letter/resume creates everyone’s—CAPA internship team, possible internship sites—first impression of you. Ask CAPA staff when you are interviewed if you should rewrite yours. Look online for guides to writing cover letters and professional resumes.

PRACTICAL ADVICE

There is really NO way to predict what the exchange rate from dollars to pounds will be in January 2017—Brexit has created a lot of uncertainty in the foreign exchange market. Best estimations are that dollars will go further in London for the *UB Semester in London* in 2017 than they did in 2016.

You can withdraw money at ATM machines or exchange cash at currency exchange bureaus. Both currency exchange bureaus and ATMs are located in every airport terminal. Many Marks and Spencer (a UK department chain) service desks offer favorable rates of exchange for cash and low commissions. Do not use storefront non-bank exchange bureaus, they often have hidden charges that mean you get fewer pounds for dollars. There are many ATMs all around London. Remember, making many small withdrawals from an ATM can rack up expensive bank fees; it is usually less expensive to withdraw one larger amount and pay a single bank fee than for a series of small withdrawals with a fee each time. Check with your bank before leaving home. Select a debit card from a bank that has no or small fees for foreign transactions and ATM withdrawals. Credit cards can be used in many places, although some small cafes, street markets, and pubs operate on cash only. Notify your bank/credit card companies and tell them you will be traveling to London. Most banks question purchases and withdrawals made abroad and if they have not been notified they may put a stop on your debit card withdrawals and credit card purchases.

Money

Your credit card will automatically convert the local charges into dollars on your statement, often with a service fee that shows up on your monthly statement. The advantage is the written record of purchases and that you won't need to pay until billed. However, despite the convenience (having a credit card is highly recommended) it can be easy to overspend. Carry at least some cash and be disciplined about purchases. You might want to consider getting a credit card with no foreign transaction fees, and should do so well before your departure.

Students can routinely use an ATM/debit card to get cash...there are ATMS everywhere. A debit card to withdraw cash gets the bank's exchange rate, but there is usually also a fee per transaction. Before departure, find out how much your bank or credit union fee is per transaction to avoid unpleasant surprises and make sure your bank account allows for international withdrawals. Double check that your PIN number will work abroad! Not all ATM cards automatically do: some need activation. There also may be problems if your debit card is linked to a savings account vs. a checking account. Make sure you contact your bank/credit card company to check what it will cost each time and how exactly to use your debit card/ATM in London before departure.

Do not buy traveler's checks, no one uses them any longer. Do not carry large amounts of cash, but it is not a bad idea to have a small sum as a back-up for exchange, in case of difficulties with credit or debit cards. Plan to arrive in London with at least 100 gbp (Great Britain pounds) which you can order ahead from your US bank (plan ahead, it takes several days to a week) or at your departure airport, or at a moneychanger in Singapore. A good rule of thumb is to use cash whenever possible to keep very aware of spending (using an ATM card to withdraw cash). Keep close track of debit and credit card usage and fees. Use OANDA (<https://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>) to get a rough idea about exchange rates (which change daily, keeping in mind that there will be differences in the actual rates you receive, depending on when and where you exchange money and whether there are other transaction costs (there likely will be) beyond simple exchange).

Computers and other electronic equipment

Your accommodation has Wi-Fi access. Free Wi-Fi is widely available in London (many libraries and museums, some cafes, McDonalds, Starbucks, etc.). You will be able to access computers in the CAPA Study Center routinely for email and course work during weekday business hours. While you do not need to bring your own computer to London if you are willing to travel about 20 minutes to use the computer lab at CAPA—you might find having it very convenient for course work.

You will enjoy London MUCH more if you REALLY limit time online/using social media. Streaming movies and constantly updating Facebook/Instagram/Snapchat/Twitter will undermine your enjoyment of the program. Limit calls/texts/messages home to an absolute minimum—if you are mature enough to be in London, you are mature enough to go for several days without talking to your parents. Let them know you have safely arrived, and then ask them to treat you like a mature adult who they will hear from regularly, but not daily. You'll enjoy London more if you are (mind, body and soul) fully IN London. Brag about adventures and show spectacular travel photos once you get back home. Bragging and showing off from London verges on gloating, and that's not nice.

Phones

Constant texting/chatting/talking undermines the intensity and value of the study abroad experience. When we are involved in any program activity—that is, in a classroom, on a walk, traveling to or from a site, in a museum or library, at a meal—during ALL class/program time, texting and talking on the phone are off limits (unless you have my prior permission). If you must be in communication with someone not in our program, keep conversations brief and texts to a minimum. Chronic texting/talking during program activities will result in grade deductions.

CAPA London has very specific requirements for student phones, for which you will be informed pre-departure and briefed thoroughly in London. Any “unlocked” cell phone (that is, not tied exclusively to a service provider) should work, in theory. Everyone must have phones that can be used in case of an emergency. There will be drills about how to do that once we are in London.

Advise family and friends not to expect daily contact. Communicating back home takes you out of the London social mix, heightens homesickness, undermines social relationship formation, and actually makes you something of a nuisance to your professor, internship supervisors, and fellow students. For students wanting to be in constant contact with people at home, staying home is probably the best choice. Otherwise, liberate yourself from constant contact with the familiar—dare to live “offline” and fully embrace the adventure—new city, new people, new ideas, new friends, and new conversations. Students can only immerse themselves in London if they are fully present, not tethered to their technology.

As a matter of courtesy/safety in a busy, crowded city, do not walk in/obstruct public places while reading or sending texts or taking photographs. Step out of the way and stop to do those things, so that busy passersby who work and live in London can get where they need to go. Otherwise your awareness of surroundings declines, making you a potential target for pickpockets and your slow pace really inconveniences busy people who need to dodge around those who thoughtlessly stroll and scroll. Discourteous/self-centered behavior singles out such individuals as thoughtless persons who are not smart enough to appreciate and adapt to a culture where courtesy is still highly valued and where paying attention keeps one safe.

There are MANY feasible options with UK mobile operators (like Orange, Vodafone and 3E), but please wait for CAPA to advise you which mobile phone provider to use once you are in London. The appropriate SIM card for the carrier most appropriate for CAPA's emergency system, or a cheap new phone compliant with CAPA's emergency system, will be easy to obtain (within blocks of where you are staying) the day of or after your arrival.

Time

There is a five hour time difference between US Eastern time and London, and eight (usually) between Singapore and London. You will have some jet lag the first few days in London, but it passes quickly. Despite having somewhat warmer weather typically, London is further north than Buffalo—so daylight hours are very short for the first week we are in London. It gets dark around 4:30/5:00 pm. For Singaporeans, expect a HUGE change in heat and light—from the typical tropical 12 hours of daylight and warmth you are accustomed to. But that's okay, London is beautiful when she wears her cloak of city lights at night.

Londoners are noted for punctuality and good manners, so do not be surprised if chronic lateness draws unwelcome attention to such inconsiderate behavior. All class activities will start on schedule, we cannot wait for stragglers. Build in a little extra time for the quirks of using public transportation. Late students send a signal that they believe their time and preferences are more important than others, who should not mind being kept waiting. No. Lateness is incredibly inconvenient and disrespectful of others. Professor Street is a stickler for punctuality—barring an emergency, she will always be on time (early). The same standards of courtesy and respect apply to students. Being late for course-related required activities is costly in terms of grades.

Water

Water is safe to drink from all taps in homes/businesses in London. Save a lot of money and prevent a lot of plastic waste by using a refillable water bottle rather than unnecessarily purchasing bottled water.

Food

There are no special warnings about food. European and British food safety laws seem to keep most people free of food-borne illness most of the time. Use common sense in terms of safe temperatures for cooking and storing food items for consumption in your accommodations.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Students are responsible for arranging their own air travel and ground transfer from the London airport to central London. It is best not to purchase your airline ticket until we know what time, exactly, we can start to check into student accommodations. Planning well will save hours of sitting around (tired) surrounded by luggage if you arrive too early, or check-in hassles if you arrive too late. Last year, several students traveled to other European cities before the program started and arrived late to London=bad outcome. Additional travel is best done at the end of the program. Arrive in London, with time built in to recover from jet lag/get your bearings, finish your course, then travel.

The main international airports are London Heathrow (LHR) and London Gatwick (LGW). If you want to coordinate travel with other students let me know when you fill out the program survey (coming in late October) and I'll put you in touch with others who want to do the same thing. I usually fly into LHR because it most convenient for where I live. LHR will also be most convenient for you, but only by a small margin. You will receive clear directions for traveling to your housing from both major London airports. Check in for housing is the morning of January 11. All students must leave flats the morning of April 22, 2017.

Early arrivals/late departures cannot be accommodated. Students should plan travel to arrive in London at an appropriate time (morning) on January 11. That likely means an overnight flight the evening of January 10, to arrive in London January 11. Triple check travel plans to be sure you are booked to ARRIVE in London on the morning of Wednesday, January 11.

Passports and Visas

All program participants must have a valid passport for travel to the United Kingdom that will be valid for at least six months beyond the end of the program. CAPA will provide detailed information about how to apply for the visa, and will include a special CAS number that will enable you to complete the UK Border Agency process to obtain it. You must send your passport to the British government (arrangements will be slightly different in the US and in Singapore or elsewhere) to get your visa, so that means you will need to be without it for up to two weeks. Failure to make timely and appropriate visa arrangements would mean students cannot join the program in London and may result in the loss of program fees.

Keeping valuables and documents safe

Do not bring any irreplaceable items to London. Carry money, credit cards, passport, etc. on your person or store safely. Purchase a "wallet on a string" to wear under your clothes (available online and at many stores, including even WalMart and Target in the US), whether on a cord for around your neck and under shirts, or a money belt for under clothing around the waist. Losing money, credit cards, cash or (worst of all) your passport will make London memorable, but very unpleasant. Be careful. Scan your passport and credit cards and leave a copy at home with someone easy to contact, and a perhaps consider a password-protected PDF file that you store safely elsewhere and can access online in case you lose such items in London.

Electrical/electronic equipment

The London standard is 220V; most electronic equipment, including laptops, tablets, phones, etc. have built in conversion capacity, so all that is required is a plug adapter. Other US electrical appliances (like curling irons, hair dryers, etc.) typically need expensive and heavy voltage converters (not just plug adapters) to be used. I recommend leaving electrical appliances at home and obtaining what you need in London (share a hair dryer and straightener with flat mates). Singaporean voltages (I think) are the same as the UK. Regardless of whether US appliances or electronics need a voltage converter, a special "plug" is needed to fit into the UK wall sockets. Plug adaptors can be purchased cheaply from many London shops in your neighborhood if you need one.

PACKING TIPS

Guiding Principles

- Traveling light is WAY better than struggling with luggage! This can't be overemphasized. You might have fewer "outfits" to choose from, but who cares? Buy a new scarf at a street market!
- Dark clothing, laundered regularly, is best. Pack for a week or 10 days, and do laundry.
- Shopping is plentiful if you ever decide that you need something you did not bring.
- Check with your airline for baggage allowances (number and weight varies widely by airline). Then think, would you rather shop for something new and different in London, or pay the substantial expense of an overweight bag?
- Bring a small bag to use for excursions (a regular campus-sized backpack is ideal). It can probably double as your personal carry on item (check to be sure about carryon luggage limits).
- Pack your luggage and then walk around the block and up a flight of stairs with it. If that is a struggle, repack and eliminate some items. You must be able to handle your luggage by yourself.

Additional Observations

- Winter weather in London typically ranges from cold to very cold. Don't lose heart, it warms up!
- You will walk A LOT. You must have comfortable shoes. Do not buy new shoes unless you have time to break them in completely before you leave. If your feet hurt, everything hurts. Two pairs of shoes is a best (one on your feet, one (maybe) drying out).
- Plan for rapidly changing temperatures, inside and out, by dressing in layers. Shirt, sweater, and jacket; tights, pants, jeans, even silk long johns. Most British university students would rather be caught dead than be seen in public in sweats. Hoodies seem okay; sweats/PJs, not so much.
- Include at least one dress/skirt/dressy trousers for women and casual business attire for men (nice shirt, khakis) for special occasions, i.e. performances, special dinners, clubbing, etc.
- Although dress is casual for most course activities, if there is any different expectation in attire associated with your internship it will be communicated in plenty of time for students to adjust.
- Obviously, students are free to dress as they prefer for London's night life (though be forewarned that young men and women often dress up) and for other informal occasions.
- Internships typically require business casual clothes. Pack according to what you would need to wear in a similar workplace in your home city. Try to bring clothes that do "double duty." Good for work/class/relaxing.

Recommended Clothing

- Jeans/long trousers (two or three)
- Shirts - long sleeves for layering
- T-shirts/turtlenecks/sweat shirts for athletic use and warmth as under/over layers.
- 1-2 warm sweaters, nice enough for work, also functional enough for everyday use in the cold
- Warm jacket or coat for cold weather and rain
- Underwear, maybe long johns and warm socks/tights
- Scarves, hats, and gloves, maybe ear muffs if you don't like winter hats.
- Casual shoes and/or boots, comfortable for walking. Weather may (will) be chilly and wet.
- Think you will be going clubbing? A nice outfit for that.
- Something to dress up a bit (not formal, but at least a way to dress up from just jeans/T-shirts)
- Stating the obvious: you will NOT likely need a bathing suit, shorts, or sunscreen.

Personal Care*

- Travel size shampoo and conditioner, toothbrush and toothpaste
- Comb and/or hairbrush
- Antiperspirant, skin moisturizer and other creams
- Make up, razor/shaving cream, if needed
- Vitamins, daily OTC medications
- Over-the-counter generic brands of personal use and first-aid items

All of these items are readily available if forgotten. A trip to Boots to buy them is fun!

Other necessities:

- Small organizer to hold passport etc., such as a "neck wallet" that hangs inside your shirt, that way you don't have to worry about potential thefts or losses.
- Camera/i-device/folding umbrella/sunglasses
- Prescription medication/birth control pills, etc. in original containers, carried on plane with you
- Addresses/phone numbers/etc. for contacting friends and relatives

Important Suggestions from previous Londoners about "stuff"

Don't worry about "not bringing enough"; nearly all students over-pack and regret it almost immediately after seeing how many flights of stairs they have to climb to reach their flats and the relatively small amount of storage space once they get there. Do not be an over-packer.

"Pack light, pack comfortably and pack staples – jeans, a good jacket (with a hood for rainy days) and a good pair of walking shoes." – Katherine Bahys

You are responsible for hauling your own luggage at both ends of the trip. Try to travel with a single wheeled suitcase plus a small duffel bag/backpack as your personal carryon. Check with your airline for size/weight limits for carryon luggage and personal items. One legendary US student brought a single wheeled carryon and backpack for an ENTIRE four month semester in London.

Carry essential medications, contact lenses/glasses, a change of clothes and "starter" toiletries with you on the plane. You may need doctor's notes/original prescriptions to import prescribed drugs into the UK (checking that is your responsibility).

Checked bags sometimes get lost; having a toothbrush or change of underwear after a long journey is what carryon is for; being without prescription medication could harm your health. Know the difference between what you need in London (bring that) and what you think you might want (leave most of that at home, you're probably wrong on that) to be well-prepared for this adventure.

"Pack light. You'll be buying a TON of stuff." – Sarah Borth

London is an opportunity to be a sophisticated urban minimalist—a savvy traveler, not an annoying tourist. It is not the things you bring to London, but the experiences you take away, that will make this a wonderful learning and life adventure. Acquire knowledge, memories, new friendships, once-in-a-lifetime experiences, magnificent (in)sights and flavors, and manage all of that with as little "baggage" as possible (less stuff, less prejudice, a more open mind than usual). If you do that, you will make the most of this study abroad experience.

PLANNING FOR IN-COUNTRY EXPERIENCES

Arriving and settling in

Welcome to London! Once you live in London, you may never want to leave. When you are away from London, you will long to return. Its efficiency, pragmatism, blending of cultures and embedded history are likely to keep you coming back for more. When you live in London, as a member of this program, you feel truly a part of the entire world. When you live in London, you are also likely to come to think that London is the most wonderful place in the world. Apart from all its obvious and world-renowned attractions, the theatre, the galleries, the walks by the river, London is a perfect melting pot. London is a city for lovers, artists, jokers, rebels, hedonists and unexpected heroes. It is a city filled with infinite possibilities and everyone is always welcome. This is going to be the best four months of your life. Cherish it; don't let one minute of it go to waste.

Keep in mind that you are on a study abroad program that includes coursework, program activities, and experiential learning through internships. Always keep track of your deadlines and work schedules. It is after all, a STUDY abroad, not a touring abroad program. Learn to manage your time wisely early in the program: leave enough time for school, work, and play. All are important.

A tip for all students: ASSIGNMENTS START TO PILE UP TOWARDS THE END OF THE PROGRAM. You honestly do not want to spend your last five weeks in London stuck in your flat doing coursework. At the very least, keep up. Get ahead if you can. The way to do that is to be disciplined, or maybe agree with your flatmates or other students to designate one day or evening each week as "study time."

Orientations at CAPA London

Attending ALL orientation programs organized by CAPA is mandatory. CAPA personnel have a lot of experience and the orientations are designed to try to help you get a good start and accustomed to living in London. Many of the orientation programs provide students with tips regarding everyday life. For instance, "How to live in London on a budget" is exceptionally helpful – you do not want to miss out on this, especially since life expenses in London can get ridiculously high if you don't watch your spending.

*"CAPA staff tries really hard to help students make the most out of their time here.
Their advices are extremely insightful!" – Jo Tan*

Getting to know flatmates and roommates

It is definitely an adventure and a challenge: a pretty intimidating and nerve-wracking and/or exciting experience when you first arrive in London and are ushered into flat with a bunch of other students (strangers) with whom you will be spending the next 4 months. However, the worry that you might stick out like a sore thumb and/or be lonely without your close friends and family will soon fade after you've gotten to know your flat mates and other *UB Semester in London* students. Not a single person who has met these strangers halfway (because that is where we all need to meet, in the middle) has failed to make new, lifelong friends. If you find yourself friendless in London, perhaps it is because you are not trying hard enough to be a friend. The UB program students will become your family away from home and there will always be something crazy, hilarious and heart-

warming (and to tell the truth, sometimes annoying) happening at home in London, yes, with those people who started out as strangers in your flat. It is these unexpected surprises and bonds you create with your new London family that make transitions all the more bearable and enjoyable. Remember, everyone is in the same boat; no one is “at home” yet.

Still, making new friends and adapting to living with people who start out as strangers takes some thoughtfulness and sometimes, some hard work, and definitely, an open mind and tolerance. If you come to London determined to do things the way you always have in the past, or to always get your own way...making friends will be tough. So let go, let live, make friends.

“Be respectful towards your roommates and others living in your flat – have an open communication. But always remember to have fun!” – Sarah Hussain

Some tips to help you live in harmony with your roommates:

1. Compromise. Really – that’s the key
2. Create a shared understanding – talk through your usual habits with others, try to understand theirs, and then...meet in the middle. There is almost always a way to understand the other person’s position. Insisting on always getting your way is the same as telling others that YOU are more important than they are. Really? If that is how you act, don’t be surprised if you have problems.
3. Be open-minded. Don’t judge. You don’t know everything/all the circumstances.
4. Talk through any problems when they happen; deal with “problems” fast, don’t nurse grudges.
5. Be respectful of cultural differences – remember that you are all new to London and that your roommates may be from half way across the world and have different practices or habits they deem as “normal”. Some examples include room temperature, how kitchens are used and when/where dining occurs, what is meant by “clean” and wearing shoes in flats. For example, UB students from Singapore come from a tropical climate to study in a cold one, while students from north campus are experiencing “usual” temperatures. Consequently, the Singapore students’ preference for really warm flats clashes with north campus students’ preferences for (what to Singapore natives) are much cooler places. Layers, patience, understanding the perspective of the other, and taking turns controlling the temperature can go a long way to managing this difference. Wearing shoes in the house is customary in North America where feet otherwise get cold; it is not in Singapore. It does not mean North Americans are dirty people and Singaporeans are clean ones—it means one set of people is accustomed to wearing shoes in the house, the other is not. That’s all. Ask questions. Don’t take offense if someone asks you a question—that’s how we learn. Talk about differences with roommates/flatmates to see if you can understand each other and make some kind of agreement about how to manage clashing cultures.
6. Making friends with someone from a different country is extremely exciting. Talk to students from other countries about your local culture and you will be surprised by how fascinated they will be about your different experience. Singapore is not in China. The United States is not just what you see on TV and in the movies. Try to learn from one another!
7. Have a huge welcoming dinner, soon after arriving in London, and make sure to include everyone in the program. What better way to get to know one another than through food? Tastes and smells from different parts of the world can take some getting used to, but it is worth the effort to get used to different—that is, after all, why you are in London, right? Remember that slurping and lip smacking in many Asian cultures can indicate enjoyment of food, not bad manners—and cooks like to know that their food has been enjoyed!

London Experiences

London holds something for everyone – if you don't like the craziness of Piccadilly Circus and Regent Street, take a walk to Hyde Park or Green Park and the many other beautiful parks for which London is famous. If the Tate Modern doesn't suit your taste, then it's off with your head at the Tower of London. The boroughs of London each have their own personality, their own vibe and their own culture. It is diverse and extreme, beautiful and rough, fast and sleepy, noisy and peaceful all at the same time. This can be overwhelming at first, but give yourself a week or two and you'll find your "zone" for enjoying all that London has to offer.

One need never be lost for words with the national conversation starter at hand. "Is it raining? Some weather we're having, isn't it?" Yes, it rains a lot in London. But on a grey and misty day there's no better place than inside a cozy pub or café or museum. When March arrives and spring approaches, there will often be an unspoken spontaneous public celebration when there's thirty minutes of uninterrupted sunshine, and all of London seems to pour out into sunny streets and parks.

Commuting and Interning in London

You'll constantly find yourself trying to juggle between work, school and play during your stay in London. It is vital to master time management, which includes building in extra time for traveling between local destinations, internships, and getting coursework done. Students often have a 9 to 5 internship on non-school days, and also some half days to be sure they get in enough hours for academic credit. Oh, and by the way...internships are not identical, expecting them to be would be silly. Make the most of YOUR internship, and don't worry yourself about someone else's.

Leave ample time for commuting to your internship site and to school. It is very important to be punctual—that is a "soft skill" that creates a good habit for school, work and life. You will likely find yourself spending a lot of time commuting around London on the Tube, as it is definitely the most efficient way of getting around London.

"There are plenty of service disruptions in the Tube due to technical faults and "man under the train". Make sure you have ample time to reach your destination in case of Tube breakdown. If you can, follow Transport for London on twitter and check for updates before you leave the house!" – Collette Miles

Some advice for you from previous students about travelling on the Tube:

1. "Don't talk loudly on the Tube, it will be frowned upon. If you must, do so quietly. People live in their own personal bubbles when they ride the Tube and Londoners prefer it that way. Many like to read so don't disturb their quality reading time." – *Nicole Aloisio*
2. "Always make sure you have your Oyster card with you." – *Jeremy Teo*
3. "Make sure you have ample time while travelling. Sometimes trains break down and you may have to find an alternate route." – *Lynn Choo*
4. "Read the free newspapers (Metro, Evening Standard) that they give out. It's good to know what's happening in the country that you live in." – *Valissa Yap*
5. "Stand on the right when travelling on the escalator. People who are in a hurry would walk on the left side." – *Margi Malhotra*

Check out Transport for London (www.tfl.gov.uk) before every journey for real time information/maps for walking/cycling, delays and line closures, and especially for weekend Tube closures.

Managing Coursework

The classes for this study abroad program offer the chance for you to gain different perspectives regarding London, America, Singapore and the world. The course work that you do while in London will definitely give context to what you're seeing and experiencing around London during your free time. So make sure you go to class, participate fully, understand the subject and do your assignments! Just remember, it's a good idea NOT to crash your GPA while studying abroad.

Students often are tempted to neglect and procrastinate about their school work at the beginning of the program and then regret it in April. So get your act together early, manage your time wisely. Prioritize your assignments and keep in mind all of the deadlines. Consider forming a reading or study group, or designating specific times in your flat when everyone will be involved in their academic pursuits. It will make a big difference if you can keep organized and up-to-date on reading materials, that way you'll never have to worry about catching up.

Managing Internships

Moving away from the comfort of books and classrooms to face a company or organization where putting your skills into practice and where confronting real life challenges becomes more important than memorizing facts or understanding concepts, can be quite intimidating. Students know how to be students, but haven't quite figured out how to be workers yet. An internship is often a stark contrast to the student lifestyle that students are accustomed to, especially for those who have never held down a "real" job. Internships involve approximately 20 hours a week and a whole load of hard work. However, it is also a great opportunity to learn about life in the working world, gain hands-on experience in your chosen field, and see and learn from professionals in action. In short, an internship is a brief taste of what real, full-time employment, holds in store for the future.

Some might even say that the experience you get during an internship has as much value (and in some fields, even more) than your actual academic qualification. This is your chance to put all your talents, dedication, and skills into action, to prove that you can do what you believe you are qualified to do. Proving your abilities speaks volumes to potential employers and that is the true value of an international internship. Superb performance in an internship requires superb commitment, and can lead to great employment opportunities later, accompanied by glowing letters of recommendation.

Here are a few insights into the workplace culture in London that may help you prepare for your internship:

1. Some workplace settings in the UK are rather informal, at least in terms of day-to-day interactions among employees.
2. Informal does not equal unprofessional.
3. Sarcasm, irony, and humor are usually highly appreciated in the British workplace.
4. What many students consider to be vulgarities are the norm in some workplaces. Don't judge!
5. Your colleagues will make you tea, and sometimes you're expected to do the same. This is NOT a menial task; it is a shared norm of British workplace culture.
6. Be open-minded. You are, after all, from a different culture, inexperienced, and the stranger in their midst. Sit back and learn for a few days, ask questions, then step up and participate.

And you may want to keep in mind these few tips from previous students...

1. “Advocate for yourself – ask for meaningful projects to do!” – *RJ Tan*
2. “Make an effort to get the most out of your internship.” – *Angela Yang*
3. “Be on time, be engaged. Always try your hardest. You may very well need these connections in the future.” – *Erika Labaff*
4. “Tell your supervisor what you want to do; they may have connections to let you do more stuff.” – *Jasline Toh*
5. “Have realistic expectations.” – *Viona Ho*
6. “If you are uncomfortable with your internship, do not be afraid to talk to the CAPA internship team. They can probably help.” – *Sarah Borth*

Working within a company or organization is often an eye-opening experience and it is almost impossible to fully understand the realities of your chosen career without doing some hands on work. Interning is a great way to try out your chosen field, or something you think you might want to do but are unsure about, to make sure you like it before you commit on a more permanent basis. Performing poorly in an internship is not an option. Students must be dependable—that is, go to their site every day, on time, and perform to high standards. In order to get academic credit, students must fulfill their learning agreements, work at least the minimum 200 hours (and I emphasize this is the minimum—you should NOT be aiming to do that little, you MUST do that to be minimally eligible for credit), do all the course-related writing assignments, and get a satisfactory evaluation from the internship supervisor. Although it has never happened yet to a UB student, blowing off an internship and getting “fired” could get a student dismissed from the program.

It is NOT okay, ever, to miss an internship day for optional travel, sleeping in, or catching up with coursework.

Exploring London

London is a great big city where the past meets the present with an endless amount of opportunities and places to explore. With two thousand years of history, London is the perfect combination of the old and the new. You can find some of the oldest buildings in the world along with some of the most modern designs standing right next to one another. London is like a series of little villages, each with its own interesting character. There is ALWAYS something new to do and something new to see around London. So get out of bed, walk out of your flat, use that Oyster pass to its full advantage, and go explore this amazing city you now call home.

Be sure to take full advantage of the ME (My Education) events that are curated by CAPA London staff. It is rather silly to pass up on learning something new about your adopted city from someone who knows more about it than you do...and especially when it is an inclusion in the *UB Semester in London* program fee. Most of these activities are free, and when there is a cost, it is always minimal (and totally worth it). Don't miss out by failing to sign up.

A few more suggestions from former students:

1. “Get up a little earlier on weekends to check out markets like Brick Lane, Shoreditch and Spitalfields Market!” – *Christine Goh*
2. “Go alone! Go solo! Immerse yourself in the new culture” – *Chelsea Reinhardt*

3. “Try and take the bus sometimes. You’ll see much more a lot more of London as compared to being underground while on the Tube.” – Meghan Murphy
4. “Buy a proper pair of shoes that doesn’t hurt your feet when you walk around London.” – Rob Walsh
5. “Get lost in London.” – Sherlin Ong Wen Lin
6. “Don’t leave exploring London till after Spring Break. Do something every weekend, you only have a short time in London.” – Jie Huan Chua
7. “MAKE A BUCKET LIST.” – Elizabeth Sim

Travelling out of London

London’s geographic location allows for flexibility to travel to many different cities and neighboring countries like France, Belgium, Netherlands and Scotland – but it is time for another reminder: You are on a study abroad program in London, not a four month vacation. Do not be too ambitious a traveler. Even if you don’t travel out of London for the entire duration of your stay (some students choose to remain entirely in London), you will still have a wonderful time. Your first obligation is to perform well in classes and professionally in your internship. Still, many students have a four day school and work week, leaving ample amount of time for exploring different cities in the UK and neighboring countries during some weekends. But truly, it should only be some weekends—too much travel outside of London will be expensive and put your academic performance at risk.

CAPA has a travel fair the first week you are in London. A number of different tour operators provide information about student-centered travel that can make excursions outside of London fun, hassle-free, and affordable. CAPA also leads some trip; those fill up quickly, so if you are interested in a CAPA guided trip, be prepared to sign up and pay your deposit early.

Some websites that may be helpful while you plan your travels:

Trains & Coaches

www.thetrainline.com

www.nationalexpress.co.uk

www.eastmidlands.co.uk

www.virgintrains.co.uk

www.eurostar.co.uk

Air travel

www.ryanair.com

www.expedia.com

Accommodation

www.booking.com

www.hostelworld.com

www.hostelbookers.com

Some final travel tips for you...

1. Travel alone, at least once, even if it's just a day trip. Just do it—be entirely solo, pleasing only yourself, depending on no one else. Part of the reason you studied abroad was to be independent. Nothing will feel more rewarding than solo-navigating your way through buying tickets, traveling, arriving, and enjoying a destination all by yourself.
2. Live every day with the mantra “my time here is short”, because it really is. Actually, this is not a travel tip, it is just a tip.
3. Don't travel “too much.” “Too much” varies by student, but if you spend most weekends outside of London, you won't take full advantage of the wonderful city you are living in for a very short time, or the accommodations you have already paid for. Consider limiting travel to a weekend or two, or maybe just spring break, and doing more extensive travel at the end of the program.

Saying Goodbye...

The day will come when it is time to say goodbye to the beautiful city you've been calling home for the past few months. It will feel like time flew by in a blink of an eye. In the last few weeks you will try to do everything you haven't yet done—and unless you have planned ahead—while also trying to write final term papers, prepare for exams, and wrap up your internship. Some tips:

1. Finish up ALL your assignments before you leave London.
2. Do your best work on assignments, final exams, wrapping up your internship.
3. Make sure you've seen everything you want to see, and done everything you want to do. If you haven't, why aren't you out there doing those things?
4. Thank the staff at CAPA. Drop them an email or just head downstairs when you're in CAPA for class and thank them for the work they did behind the scenes to ensure your time in London would be rewarding. They've worked very hard, cared about your experience, and deserve your gratitude.

Last but definitely not the least, you're probably wondering about how to say goodbye to your friends who have become your family away from home. There is no easy way to say goodbye. The French say *au revoir* which loosely translates into “until we see one another again” and that might be the best way to think about this. Goodbye in London does not mean forever. Friends can always meet up again (even if friends are half the world away from you). There's always Skype!

The friends you will make in the *UB Semester in London* program will have shared your fears and frustrations, affection and tolerance, experiences and adventures. They will be part of you forever, even if only in memories. And (if you've done London right) you will be surprised by how much YOU have changed (usually for the better) by the end. You will know more about the world. You will be more open-minded and tolerant. You will be more interesting and better informed, about yourself, about your own country, and about the world. The wonderful, quirky, funny, frustrating, interesting individuals and experiences are irreplaceable and unforgettable. When this extraordinary experience comes to its bittersweet end, you will realize that this past semester would not have been the same with the absence of any single one of your companions. Your London experiences and relationships will continue to express themselves in the future, in wonderful and unexpected ways.

**You may long to return to this beautiful city; it will welcome you back with open arms.
Once a Londoner...always a Londoner.**

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

UB Study Abroad Programs:

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Email ✉: maryodrz@buffalo.edu or studyabroad@buffalo.edu

United States Embassy in London

24 Grosvenor Square

London, W1A 2LQ, United Kingdom

Switchboard from US ☎: 011 44 2074 999000

Direct dial in London ☎: 0207 499-9000

In the case of an emergency involving a U.S. citizen outside of office hours

☎ telephone on: 01253 501106 if dialing from the UK

☎ telephone on: 011 44 1253 501106 if dialing from the U.S.

☎ telephone on International dialing code +44 1253 501106 if dialing from elsewhere.

In the case of an emergency involving a U.S. citizen during office hours

☎ the Embassy on: 02890-386104 if dialing from the UK

☎ the Embassy on: 011 44 2890 386104 if dialing from the U.S.

☎ the Embassy on international dialing code + 44 2890 386104 if dialing for elsewhere.

Office hours are Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 5:00pm, except closed on American, British, and Northern Irish holidays. The above numbers are for emergencies only.

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Students who are not American or Singaporean would contact their consular/embassy organization in London in the event of an emergency.

Contacts in London

Police/Fire/Ambulance emergencies in London (call first if appropriate): ☎ 999

CAPA Emergency Number (call first if appropriate, or after 999): ☎ (0)7767 352 184

Professor Debra Street (personal London phone, 24 hrs for emergencies): ☎ +44 (0)777 223 4748
(call after first notifying emergency responders and CAPA)